

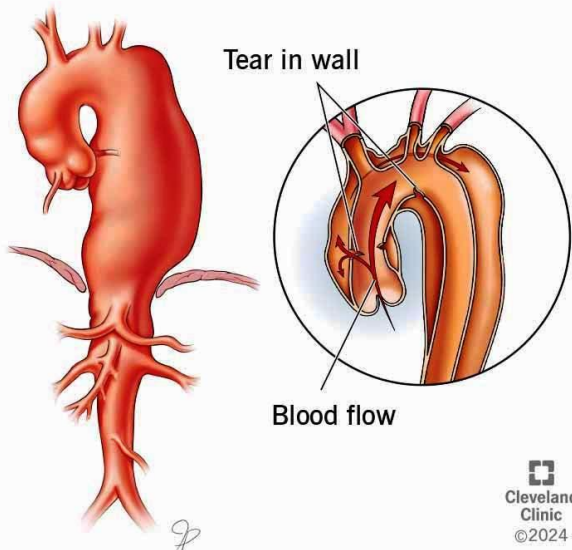
Aortic Dissection

Aortic dissection is a tear in the inner layer of a weak area of your aorta. Blood going through the tear splits your aorta's layers. Your aorta is the main artery that delivers oxygen-rich blood to your body. Aortic dissection is a life-threatening condition that requires immediate care. Treatment includes several types of surgery and medication.

Overview

An aortic dissection is a tear in your aorta's inner layer. This condition diverts blood between your aorta's layers

Aortic dissection



An aortic dissection is a life-threatening tear in your aorta's inner layer. Blood goes between your aorta wall's layers.

What is aortic dissection?

An aortic dissection is a tear in your aorta. This is the main artery that carries oxygen-rich blood away from your heart to the rest of your body. It runs through your chest and abdomen and down to your legs. A rare condition, an aortic dissection begins abruptly when a tear happens in the inner layer of a weakened area of your aorta. Blood surges through the tear, causing the inner and middle layers (your aorta wall has three) to separate (dissect).

As diverted blood flows between the tissue layers, the normal blood flow to parts of your body may slow or stop, or your aorta may rupture completely.

Without quick diagnosis and care, an aortic dissection can cause sudden death. This is a life-threatening condition. Get emergency treatment right away. You may

feel scared, but first responders will know what to do. Each year, 5 to 30 people per 1 million have an aortic dissection.

Types of aortic dissection

There are two main aortic dissection types:

- **Stanford Type A Aortic Dissection:** This type starts in the first (upper) part of your aorta, closer to your heart. It can be **immediately life-threatening**. It usually requires emergency open-chest surgery to repair or replace the first part of the aorta where the tear started. The dissection usually extends through the entire length of the aorta. This is **a more common type than Type B**.
- **Stanford Type B Aortic Dissection:** This type begins farther down your aorta (descending aorta beyond the arch), and farther from your heart. Like the Type A dissection, this usually extends from the descending aorta into your abdominal aorta. **But it doesn't involve the first part of the aorta**. You may or may not need surgery right away, depending on where the dissection is and whether it's cutting off blood flow to your organs.

Healthcare providers also use the DeBakey classification system, which has three types.

- Type 1 starts in your ascending aorta and extends through your descending aorta.
- Type 2 starts in and is limited to the ascending aorta (both Type 1 and 2 would be considered Stanford Type A).
- Type 3 starts in your descending aorta and extends downward (like Type B).